



# FLORIDA HERITAGE

WINTER 1999

## Mission San Luis

Reconstructing a 17th Century Spanish Mission


### Cross Creek

The rural home of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings

### Lake Okeechobee

Take a driving tour away from the crowded coast





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just beaches and umbrella drinks.*

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and Sombrero Cup Regatta in Marathon to the Indian Key Festival in Islamorada and the Island Jubilee in Key Largo. Of course, what would a cultural mecca like this be without some equally enlightening fishing and diving?

For reservations and information on cultural events, call **1-800-FLA-KEYS**. Or visit our web site at [www.fla-keys.com](http://www.fla-keys.com). Because while the Florida Keys are a great place to unwind, we'd like you to get to know our deeper side.

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*Come as you are*



# table of Contents

VOLUME 7, NUMBER 1 WINTER 1999

## Features

### 10 Mission San Luis

On a shady hilltop in Tallahassee is the most thoroughly investigated Spanish mission in the southeast.

*By Rusty Ennemoser*

### 14 Love of a Creek

The Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings home at Cross Creek is where the famed author discovered and wrote about the people of Florida's rural heritage.

*By Phillip M. Pollock*

### 18 But Where's the Lake?

Discover the history behind the scenery on this driving tour of Lake Okeechobee.

*By Michael Zimny*

### 20 History Beneath the Palms

Fort Myers boasts history, historic architecture and more palm trees than you can shake a stick at.

*By Michael Zimny*

## Departments

### 3 Editorial

### 4 News and Field Notes

### 23 Calendar

### 26 Books

### 28 On a Road Less Traveled

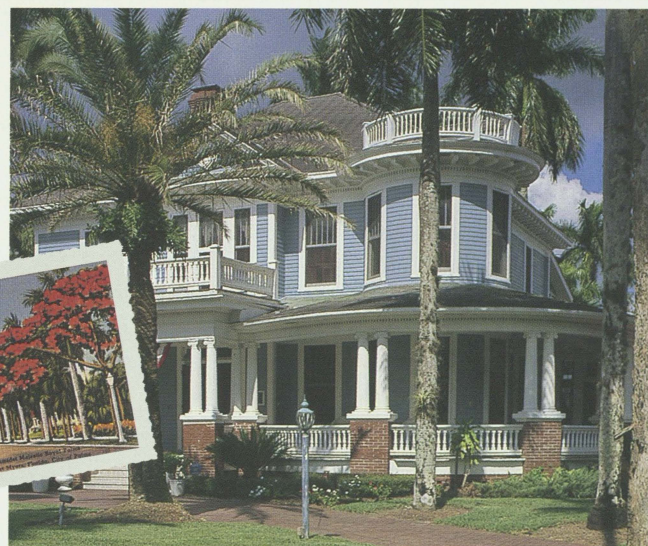
### 29 Marketplace



14



18



20

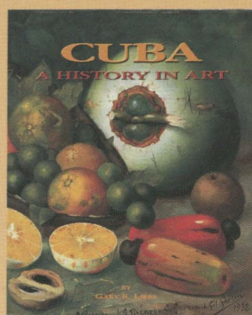


ON THE COVER: Mission San Luis. Photo by Ray Stanyard.

BACK COVER: Seville Historic District, Pensacola.



# A Museum visit without leaving your armchair

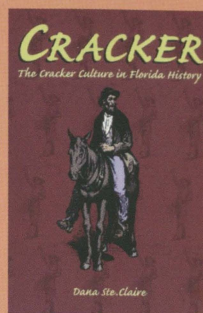


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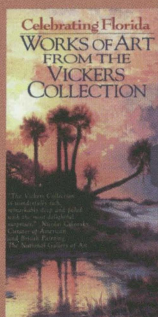
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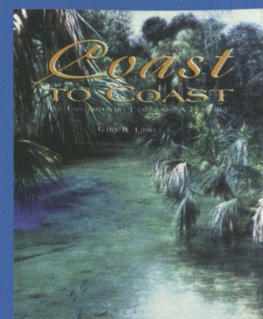


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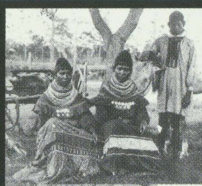
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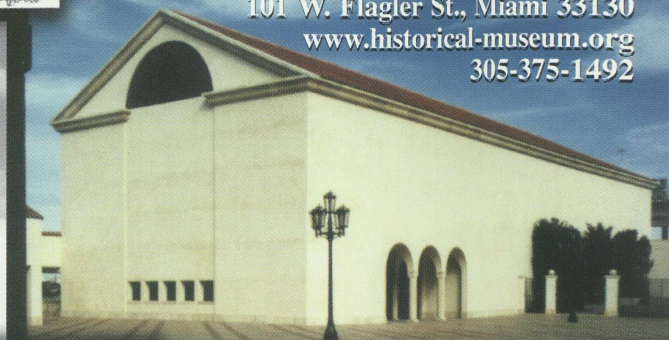


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## IN THIS ISSUE

# A NEW LOOK IN OLD PLACES

**I**n this issue of *Florida Heritage* we bring you great examples of the diversity of Florida's history. At Mission San Luis, we learn the story of the Apalachee Indians of North Florida and their encounters with the Spanish. Three generations of Spanish and Apalachee people formed a unique partnership that combined elements of both cultures to forge a strategic alliance for five decades. As more archaeological investigations are completed and historic buildings reconstructed, Mission San Luis is destined to become one of the state's major heritage attractions.

Some of the most remarkable archaeological sites in the state are visible from the air around Lake Okeechobee. A drive around the lake brings stories of agriculture, recreation and water in a frontier setting. As early as 500 B.C., man has used and adapted the water and the land for agricultural purposes. Today, the big lake's resources offer much to nature lovers and history seekers.

"There's only one Fort Myers, and ninety million people are going to find out about it," predicted Thomas Edison for what was then a tiny settlement of 349 people. Today, Fort Myers is one of the fastest growing cities in the country, with a thriving historic downtown and a host of historic attractions.

Florida is justifiably proud of its literary legacy, and Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings is perhaps the epitome of Florida writers. Through *Cross Creek* and *The Yearling*, she presented the rugged and independent spirit of the Florida Crackers to the rest of the world. At the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings State Historic Site, visitors can get a sense of the peacefulness and beauty that inspired her writing.

We hope you will include Florida's many historic treasures in your vacation plans for 1999. Happy New Year!



Above,  
Mission San  
Luis,  
Tallahassee;  
Left, A view of  
Lake  
Okeechobee



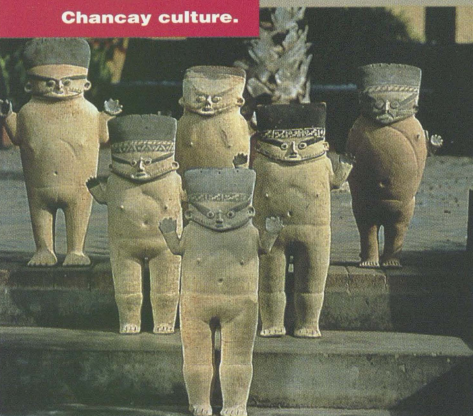
## Exhibitions

Florida International Museum and Norton Museum of Art are preparing for heavy visitation next spring at two major exhibitions. At Florida International Museum in St. Petersburg, ***Empires of Mystery—the Incas, the Andes, and Lost Civilizations*** continues through April 25. At Norton Museum of Art, ***The Invisible Made Visible—Angels from the Vatican*** is open through April 4. Both exhibits display priceless art and cultural materials.

The *Empires of Mystery* exhibit explores the mystical and sometimes magical qualities associated with ancient Peru. This is the largest exhibition of Peruvian artifacts ever

## From Angels to Incas— Exhibits Brighten Museum Corridors

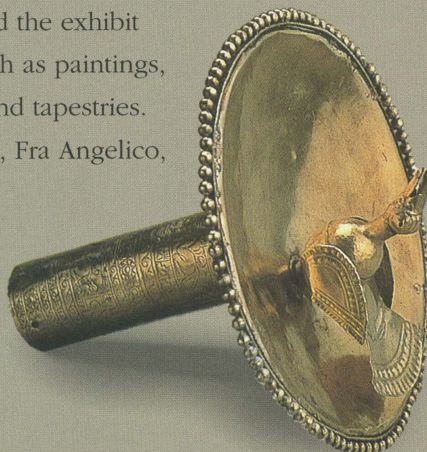
Sculpted female *cuchimilcos*.  
Chancaay culture.



viewed in the United States. The exhibit features three mummies, gold ceremonial objects, ornate nose rings and 1,500-year-old human skulls that show evidence of successful brain surgery. These objects span a several thousand year period of history, and the artifacts include those related to rituals, artistry, warfare and daily lifestyle. The museum's official web site, [www.floridamuseum.org](http://www.floridamuseum.org), provides updated information on *Empires of Mystery*. The Norton Museum in West Palm Beach provides viewers with a more ethereal experience with *The*

*Invisible Made Visible*. This exhibit looks at representations of angels from the extensive collections of the Vatican Museums. The various artworks were created between 1,000 B.C. to the present, and the exhibit includes more than 100 rare and sacred objects, such as paintings, sculpture, gold and silver objects, jeweled vessels and tapestries. Artists in the exhibition include Gentile da Fabriano, Fra Angelico, Masolino, Veronese, Raphael and many others.

For more information regarding the *Empires of Mystery* exhibit, call Florida International Museum at (800) 777-9882. For information on the *Invisible Made Visible* exhibit, call Norton Museum of Art at (561) 832-5196. —PMP.



NORTON MUSEUM OF ART



Top left, Sarcophagus Lid with Cupids Aboard Chariots; Top right, Faith; Bottom left, Concert of Angels.

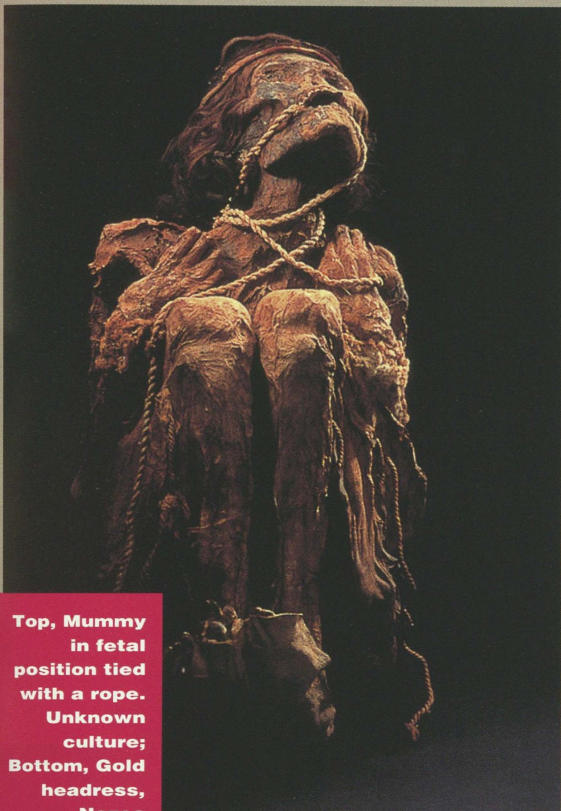


FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM, PHILLIP SCHOLZ



Top, Gold ceremonial knife, Lambayeque culture, Left, Gold earplug with a bird on the disk.



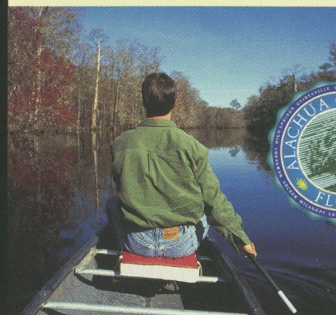


Top, Mummy in fetal position tied with a rope. Unknown culture; Bottom, Gold headress, Nazca culture.



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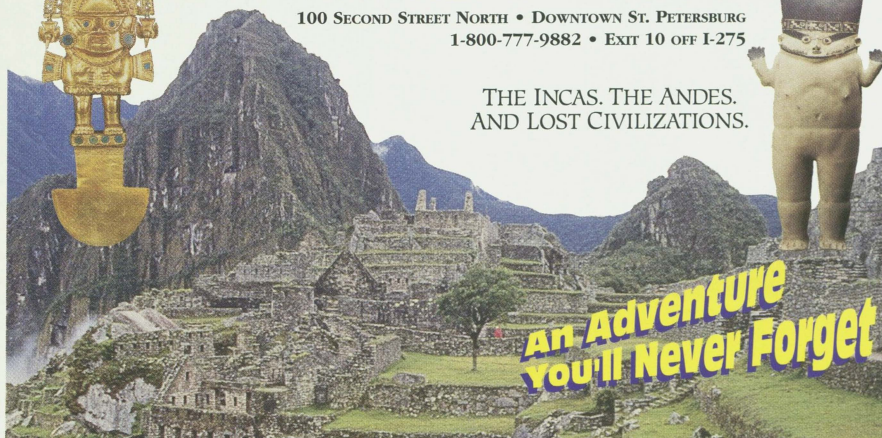
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# Morse Museum to Open 1893 Tiffany Chapel



In April, the Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art in Winter Park will unveil the chapel Louis Comfort Tiffany designed for the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Unseen by most of the public for more than a century, the chapel is one of the few complete interiors created by Tiffany which he described as "some of my best work." The chapel is a small, intimate space, distinguished by rich mosaics, leaded glass windows and Byzantine-Romanesque architecture. Rather than a place of worship, it was meant to be walked through and observed, much like a gallery.

After the Columbian Exposition closed, the chapel was dismantled and returned to Tiffany's studios in New York City. Later it was installed beneath the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York for ten years while the

building was under construction. Tiffany then had the chapel removed and taken to his Long Island estate, Laurelton Hall, where it became part of his collection. After the estate was destroyed by fire in 1957, its collection became the nucleus of the Morse Museum. The chapel survived the fire, although many of its furnishings were scattered throughout the country.

Now reassembled, the Morse Museum plans to present the chapel as it appeared at Laurelton Hall. The Morse boasts the country's most comprehensive collection of Tiffany's work, including paintings, jewelry, lamps, leaded glass and pottery. A major expansion of the museum's galleries is now underway, which is scheduled to be completed at the same time as the chapel's opening. For information, call (407) 645-5311.—M.Z.

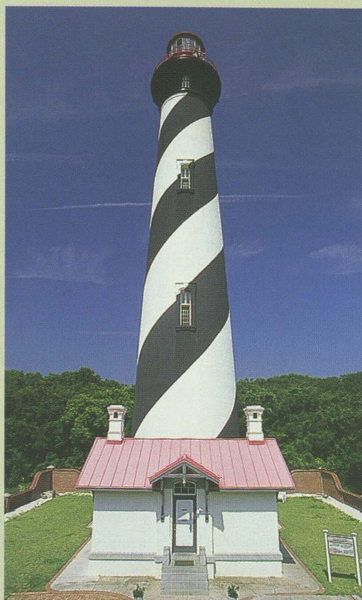
Detail of  
Reredos  
from  
Chapel  
(Crown)  
designed  
by Louis  
Comfort  
Tiffany,  
1892.





## LIGHTHOUSE NEWS

**T**his summer, the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse south of Daytona Beach became the first lighthouse in Florida to be designated a National Historic Landmark. Standing 175 feet high, the 1887 Ponce Inlet Lighthouse is the nation's second tallest brick tower. It is also one of the nation's best preserved light stations, retaining not only its tower but all of its original buildings.



BILL SUMNER

National Historic Landmark designation is the highest level of significance which a property can receive from the federal government. The lighthouse joins thirty-four other National Historic Landmarks in Florida, including the Cathedral of St. Augustine, Coral Gable's Biltmore Hotel and the Cape Canaveral launch pad. It is also one of only six lighthouses in the nation to receive the prestigious landmark designation.

Another historic Florida lighthouse, Palm Beach County's Jupiter Inlet, is due for a change in color later this year. Known throughout the United States as the "bright red beacon," an \$858,000 federal grant will be used to restore the tower to its original natural brick. The 105-foot tall tower was designed by Union General George Gordon Mead in 1860. In continuous operation since then, its light has never gone out, except for two years during the Civil War.—**M.Z.**



PHILIP M. POLLOCK

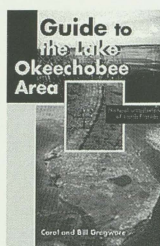
## Here's Help for Your Collections

Whether you collect tin toys, stamps, or Florida kitsch, a new book from Heritage Preservation should help you maintain your collectibles in the proper manner.

**Caring For Your Collections** is written to help the collector with the conservation and preventive maintenance of a wide variety of artworks and objects including ceramics, glass, books, manuscripts, textiles and musical instruments. It is fully illustrated and includes information on how to authenticate your collection and discusses appraisals and insurance.

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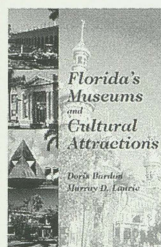
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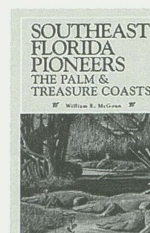
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## Volunteers Help to Restore Early Sarasota County Homestead

Restoration of the Tatum House, an 1892 rural pioneer homestead in eastern Sarasota County, is nearing completion. The modest frame vernacular house was built by William Harvey Tatum and his family who came to the area sometime after the Civil War. Until the 1950s the family's descendants lived in the house, which remained almost unchanged, not even being modernized except for the addition of electricity.

In 1996, a coalition of the Sarasota County Department of Historical Resources, the Sarasota County Historical Society, the Sarasota Alliance for Historic Preservation and the Crowley Museum and Nature Center

moved the house to preserve it as a house museum. With a \$21,000 grant from the Division of Historical Resources and using only volunteer labor, the deteriorated building was restored as accurately as possible. Deteriorated siding was replaced with 90-year-old pitch pine obtained from another building, front and rear porches were reconstructed and the house's original wooden foundation piers were strengthened by using a new concealed structural system. Historic photographs from the Sarasota

County Department of Historical Resources helped guide the restoration.

The Tatum House will play an important role in the Crowley Museum's plans to develop a working pioneer homestead. The museum and nature preserve is located on 185 acres of native rangeland and includes a museum of pioneer Florida artifacts, a blacksmith shop, preserved portions of the Pine Level Trail and miles of boardwalk and hiking paths. For more information on the museum call (941) 322-1000.—M.Z.



DEBBIE DIXON

## Veterans Descend on the North Florida Coast

From March 12–14, the small communities of Carrabelle and Lanark Village will host the Fourth Annual Camp Gordon Johnston Reunion. Camp Gordon Johnston was a key amphibious military training center established in the Big Bend region of Florida during the WW II years. The reunion honors veterans and their families who were stationed here between 1942 and 1946. During this time, the center's mission changed from infantry training to operations of harbor craft. General Omar Bradley once trained here and on the small islands in the vicinity.

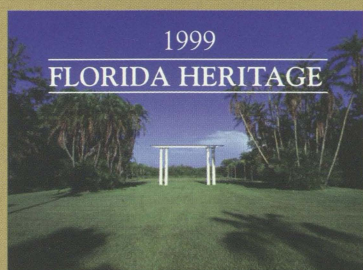
The three-day event will be highlighted by a parade, boat and bus tours, airplane rides over the training center region, swing music and food. Veterans and family members are expected to come to the event from all over the country.

The Camp Gordon Johnston Association has been very active in creating public awareness for this military site. Three times a year the association publishes a large tabloid-sized newspaper called the *Amphibian*, and has an informative web site ([www.campgordonjohnston.com](http://www.campgordonjohnston.com)). The group also plans to open a museum.

For more information about the reunion and the history of Camp Gordon Johnston, call (850) 697-8575.—P.M.P.







## 1999 FLORIDA HERITAGE CALENDAR

The 1999 Florida Heritage calendar reveals our great state like you've never seen it before.

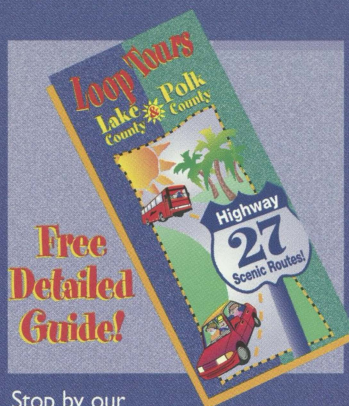
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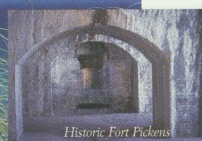
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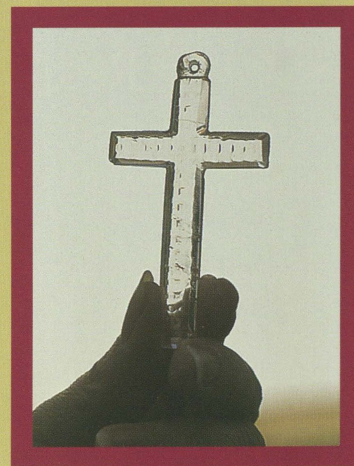




# Mission San Luis

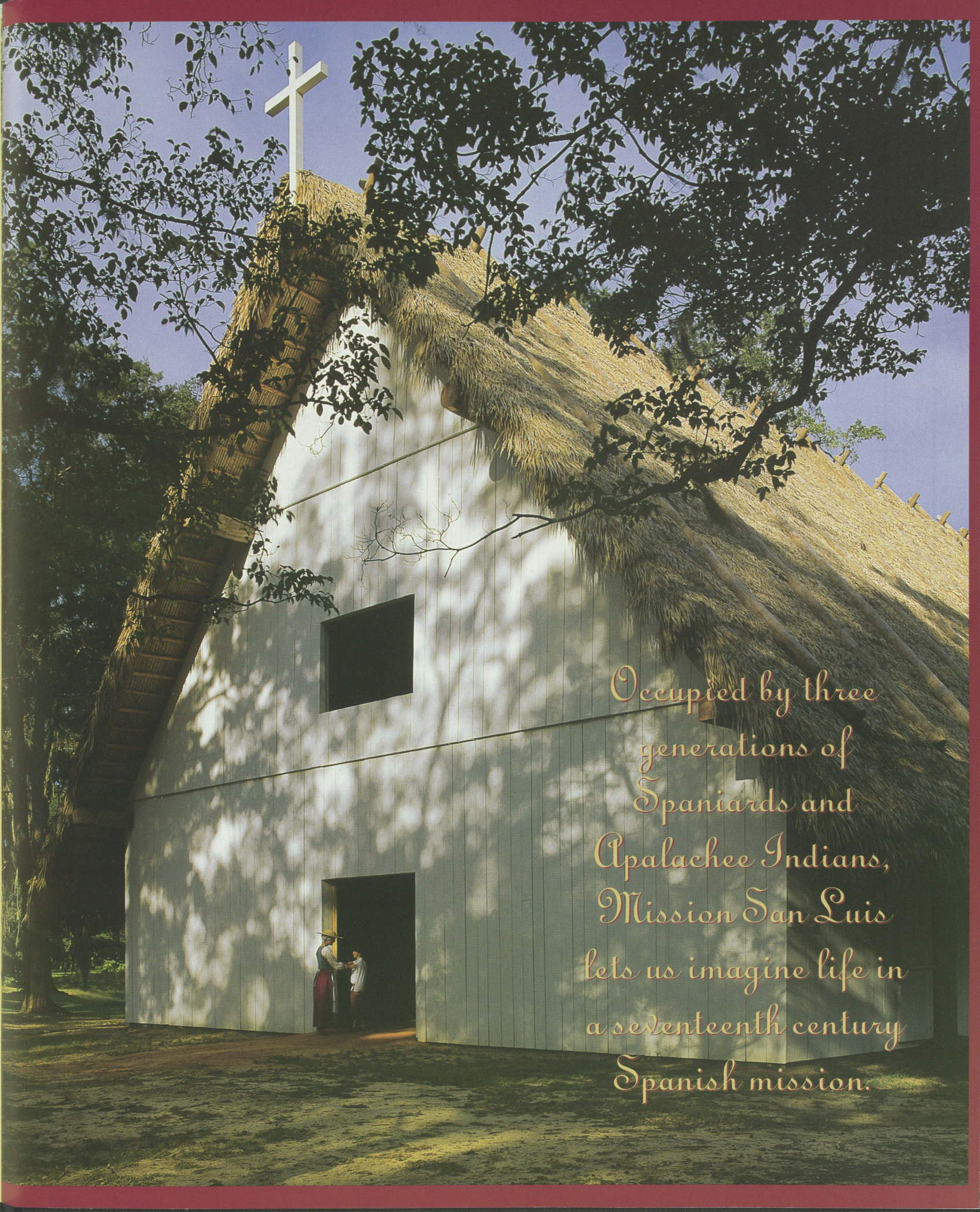
IN A SHADY HILLTOP IN TALLAHASSEE, CANOPIED BY SPREADING OAKS, LIE THE REMAINS OF A SEVENTEENTH CENTURY SPANISH MISSION. HERE WAS THE WESTERN CAPITAL OF A TRAIL OF NUMEROUS MISSIONS THAT DOTTED NORTH FLORIDA, AND HERE IS THE MOST DOCUMENTED AND THOROUGHLY INVESTIGATED OF ALL THE MISSIONS OF THE SOUTHEAST.

UNLIKE THOSE IN THE AMERICAN SOUTHWEST, FLORIDA'S MISSIONS WERE BUILT OF MATERIALS THAT WOULD NOT SURVIVE THE AGES; TODAY THERE ARE NO STANDING MISSION PERIOD STRUCTURES IN FLORIDA. BUT JUST BELOW THE RED-CLAY SURFACE OF THE GROUND ARE THE TELL-TALE REMAINS OF A COMMUNITY WHERE THREE GENERATIONS OF SPANISH AND APALACHEE PEOPLE FORMED A COLONIAL CULTURE THAT COMBINED ELEMENTS OF EACH TO FORGE A STRATEGIC ALLIANCE FOR FIVE DECADES.



AT MISSION SAN LUIS, ARCHAEOLOGISTS HAVE UNCOVERED EVIDENCE OF A ROUND CENTRAL PLAZA BORDERED BY A SPANISH CHURCH AND *CONVENTO* COMPLEX, SPANISH AND APALACHEE DWELLINGS, AN ENORMOUS INDIAN COUNCIL HOUSE, AND A FORT. VISITORS CAN WATCH ARCHAEOLOGISTS AS THEY PEEL BACK LAYERS OF EARTH TO FIND CLUES THAT TELL ABOUT THE DAILY LIVES OF SEVENTEENTH CENTURY FLORIDIANS.

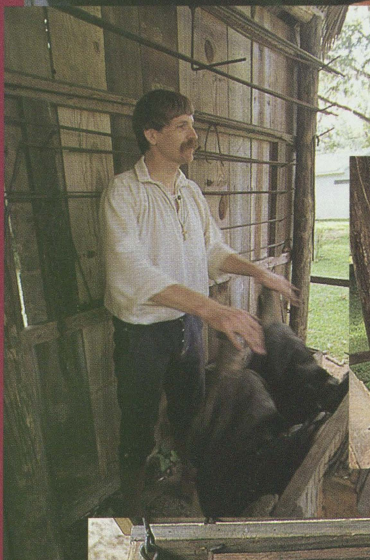
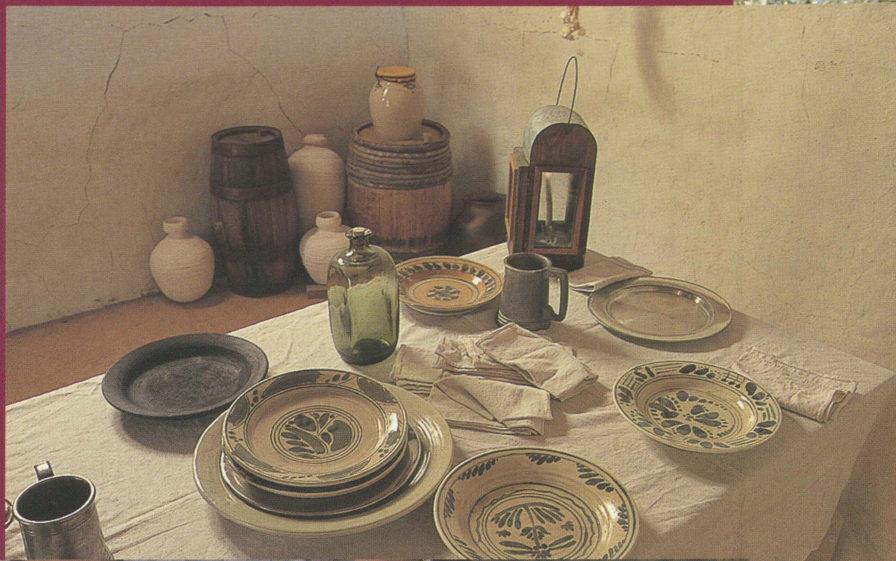


A photograph of the Mission San Luis building, a large structure with a steep, thatched roof and a white cross on top. The building's walls are made of light-colored vertical panels. A large tree on the left casts shadows on the building. Two people in period clothing stand in the doorway. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

*Occupied by three  
generations of  
Spaniards and  
Apalachee Indians,  
Mission San Luis  
lets us imagine life in  
a seventeenth century  
Spanish mission.*



# Mission San Luis



San Luis archaeologists can be seen excavating the friary complex, or convento, which probably included a detached kitchen, gardens and storage areas.



As early as 1607, Apalachee rulers had requested the assistance of Spanish friars. Although a few friars traveled through the province doing missionary work informally, it wasn't until 1633 that the Spanish began their missionization efforts in earnest. Between 1633 and 1635, at least 5,000 Indians were baptized into the Catholic faith. In 1656, the site of San Luis de Talimali was chosen by the Spaniards to serve as the westernmost headquarters in its territory. A powerful Apalachee chief moved his village here and ultimately more than 1,500 residents lived at San Luis.

The community was established on both Spanish and Indian principles of town planning. Both had traditions of central plazas which served as a focal point for religious and community activities. Both built their important buildings—meeting houses and the dwellings of important people—directly facing the plaza. Furthering the integration of the two cultures was the Spanish policy of intermarriage. Apalachee women married Spanish men, seeing the marriages as a form of upward mobility and creating a new social class, *mestizos* who were exempt from manual labor.

The massive reconstructed church, which was larger than anyone imagined when excavations began, was equal in size to the seventeenth century cathedral in St. Augustine. Its tremendous rough-hewn pillars, smooth red clay floor, lofty ceiling, and white-washed plank walls provoke a sense of awe at the skill of its builders and the importance of the church in the daily lives of its worshipers. Some 42,000 palm fronds make up its sharply pitched roof. The base of the baptismal font has been located, as well as the Indian cemetery under the floor. San Luis archaeologists can be seen excavating the friary complex, or *convento*, which probably included a detached kitchen, gardens and storage areas.

Soon to be reconstructed is a replica of the Apalachee council house, which was one of the largest Indian structures in the southeastern United States. Measuring some 120 feet in diameter, the council house served as the religious and civic center for the Apalachee, the site for dances, rituals and preparations for war.

Visitors to San Luis can also see a replica of a Spanish house. These houses were rectangular, made of wooden planks or wattle and daub and covered with thatch roofs. There may have been as many as fifty such houses at San Luis. Items recovered here suggest a relatively good lifestyle for the Hispanic residents. Many fragments of olive jars indicate that they had access to imported olives, olive oil, wine, and other foods.

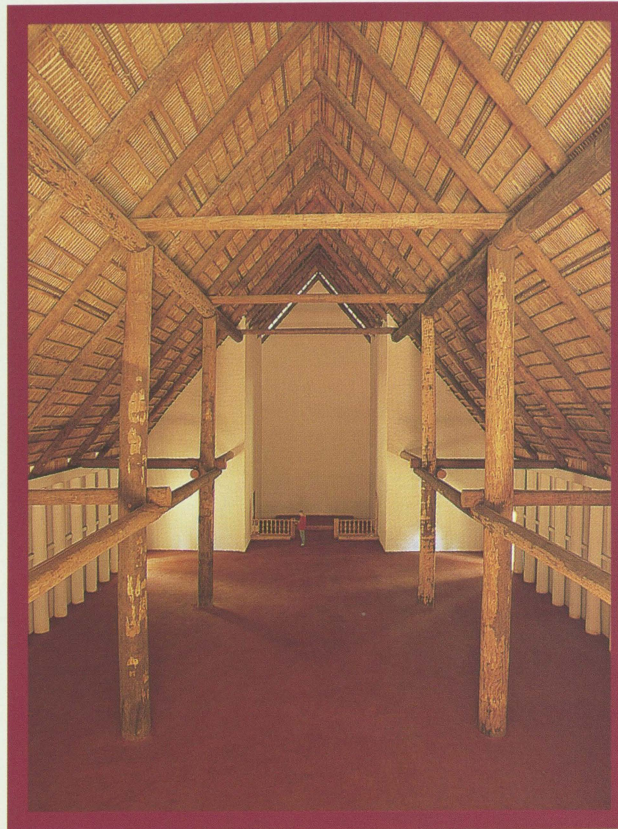
Many of the colonists who lived at San Luis were there in a military capacity. Between 1656 and 1680, the garrison numbered

between twelve and twenty-five men who used a makeshift blockhouse built by San Luis's Apalachee chief. In the 1680s, the garrison was expanded to forty Spanish soldiers, and hundreds of Apalachee warriors formed an auxiliary force. At this time, plans were made to build a new expanded blockhouse. British Carolina Governor James Moore was soon to begin a full-scale attack on Spanish Florida.

It wasn't until 1702, when a large Apalachee force was defeated by the British and their Creek allies on the banks of the Flint River, that the palisade, bastion and moat were added to the blockhouse. In 1704, with Creek forces just two days away, the garrison burned the fort and everything else at San Luis, and the town was evacuated. The soldiers, civilians and some Indians withdrew to St. Augustine, and were later evacuated from there to Cuba. The rest of the Apalachee who were not killed or enslaved moved northward into

British territory or into French-held Mobile. Today, a small band of descendants of the San Luis Apalachee are living in Louisiana. Armed with Catholic parish records, they are seeking federal recognition.

After Florida was ceded to the United States in 1819, the site of San Luis became an 800-acre plantation, and then had a number of owners during the next century. In 1960, San Luis was named a National Historic Landmark. In 1983 it was purchased by the State of Florida. Fortunately for all of us, its life in private and state ownership have protected San Luis from development. Plans call for the reconstruction of principle buildings, including the fort palisade, convento, and chief's house, in addition to those that have already been rebuilt, with the ultimate goal of creating a major historic attraction. Today, we can watch as archaeologists and historians work to uncover the secrets of the Spanish missions.



### To Learn More

Mission San Luis, 2020 West Mission Road, Tallahassee, is open to the public Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; and Sunday, 12-4:30 p.m. It is closed on Thanksgiving and Christmas. Admission is free. Visitors can watch an introductory video at the Visitor Center as well as purchase books and items related to San Luis and Florida history. For information on living history and educational programs, call (850) 487-3711. Visit the site online at <[www.dos.state.fl.us/dhr/bar/san\\_luis](http://www.dos.state.fl.us/dhr/bar/san_luis)>. Also read *The Apalachee Indians and Mission San Luis* by John H. Hann (Research Historian at San Luis) and Bonnie G. McEwan (Director of Archaeology at San Luis), published by University Press of Florida. Work has begun on furnishing the church with articles representing the Colonial period, and the staff is seeking donations of period religious furnishings and vestments. Call (850) 487-3655.





*"We need above all, I think, a certain remoteness from urban confusion, and . . . Cross Creek offers it with such beauty and grace that once entangled with it, no other place seems possible to us."*

In this way, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings described the appeal of Cross Creek. Here she found peace. And she would make this remote portion of the state, this bend in a county road and gentle flow of a creek famous as she lived and wrote here from 1928 until she died in 1953.

Rawlings was born in Washington D.C. in 1896 and was a Phi Beta Kappa student at the University of Wisconsin who majored in English. After working as a newspaper reporter for ten years and visiting Florida in 1928, she decided to move to Cross Creek later that same year. "I felt I had come home when I came to Florida," Rawlings said. She found the people of Cross Creek so compelling that she would ultimately write about them in six books in the period of 1931 to 1953.

By many accounts, Rawlings' autobiographical *Cross Creek* was her greatest literary work, although she is probably better known for the *Yearling*. The Creek region was a literary palette for Rawlings, an area separating Lakes Lochloosa and Orange, just below Micanopy. Here were interesting people whose lives were rooted to the soil. Also, there was an abundance of wildlife which enchanted Rawlings. She used any excuse to write about the great diversity of flora and fauna the Creek



BY PHILLIP M. POLLOCK

# Love

The words of  
Marjorie  
Kinnan  
Rawlings  
provided  
readers the  
world over  
with the  
rural calm of  
Cross Creek.



# of a Creek



The garden is located just outside the kitchen, and today it is maintained much as it was when Rawlings lived here.



offered. Plants of all sorts prospered in the Florida soil and none of this escaped Rawlings' pen. When a fellow author wrote that there was no spring season in Florida, she countered by saying "he did not know Florida . . . could not differentiate among the shades of green." In fact, Rawlings describes in great detail the subtleties of all four seasons in *Cross Creek*. She said, "In Florida the seasons move in and out like nuns in soft clothing, making no rustle in their passing."

**W**hen you enter the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings State Historic Site, you'll first pass through a small citrus grove. Rawlings maintained seventy-two acres of citrus, and its importance was reflected in her writing. The citrus acreage was extensive enough that the few trees in her yard were left untouched throughout each year, the unpicked oranges serving as "ornaments through the summer." Once they ultimately dropped from the trees, Rawlings noted that her free-ranging fowl picked at the fruit until "within a week it has been absorbed into the soil. Nothing is wasted."

As you come out of the grove, you'll pass the grayed barn, and the original pumphouse. Immediately to your right is a 1940 Oldsmobile parked under the carport, adjacent to the house. Though not the original vehicle Rawlings drove, it's the same model, year and dusty cream color. Looking to the left, a line of magnificent palms graces the backyard skyline. A rooster, several chickens and numerous tame mallard ducks provide colorful animation to this quiet pastoral setting. The birds eagerly search for food throughout the day and scurry under foot if visitors get too close.

Also nearby is the garden, positioned conveniently just outside the kitchen, a delightful mixture of floral and vegetable plantings. The garden was a critical element of rural existence, and Rawlings reaped benefits from it daily. A diverse mixture of southern vegetables were grown, from pokeweed to choyote to swamp cabbage. The latter, also called heart of palm, was something Rawlings said she served infrequently because "it is truly the heart of a palm tree and the epicure's feast means the death of a palmetto." Consumed in much greater quantities was okra, the "Cinderella among vegetables. It lives a lowly life, stewed stickily with tomatoes, or lost of identity in a Creole gumbo."

The old farmhouse itself is a hodgepodge construction. Originally three separate buildings interconnected with porches, Rawlings extended the front porch and added screens and bathrooms to the heart pine board and batten construction. When she completed brightening the interior of the house during her first years at Cross Creek, she contemplated trimming the property with a white picket fence, but felt it "would interfere with the feeling one has inside the house of being a part of the grove."

Rawlings took ample time from her writing to entertain at home. In the living room, she added floor-to-ceiling French doors to allow more light and in the dining area, antique Hitchcock chairs, delicate crystal and Wedgewood china. Guests were undoubtedly happy to be invited to dinner, because by most accounts, Rawlings was a noteworthy cook and visitors were known to describe her meals to

others, dish by dish. By her own admission, "My vanity about my cooking is known and pandered to."

As time passed at Cross Creek, Rawlings' books provided her with income that made her life less rustic. Proceeds from *Jacob's Ladder*, for example, made it possible to install an indoor toilet. The weathered outhouse, however, still stands as a reminder of less prosperous days. Visitors might be perplexed by the red strip of cloth attached to the stake just outside the privy, unless they had read *Cross Creek*. After numerous embarrassing situations, Rawlings' Uncle Fred devised a rather simple plan using the red cloth. "When one went in, one placed the flag in the path. When one came out, one put the flag back inside the outhouse."

The front porch is a very significant part of the home—it was here that Rawlings did most of her writing. She could take in the scents from the citrus blooming in the spring and the tea olive's sharp fragrance in the fall, could see insects buzzing industriously among her flowers and hear the calls of a great variety of birds, all of which inspired her. Mockingbirds fascinated her, because they were so adept at imitation. Rawlings related in *Cross Creek* that Edward Bok had imported English nightingales for Bok Tower, and though she heard that they had died, "the mockingbirds had learned their song. It was even lovelier . . . than that of the nightingale."

Rawlings noted, as well, that her cat Jib kept "an eye cocked to watch the birds," perhaps to her chagrin. And, whereas her dog Dinghy "turned into a hopeless introvert, Jib thrived." Today Jib's position is filled by another working cat. Marcel sleeps on the roughened shake shingles of the house at night and sometimes comes when he's called to greet guests. Often he sleeps on the quilt on the porch, where Jib would have been, lulled by the clicking of the typewriter keys just behind him.

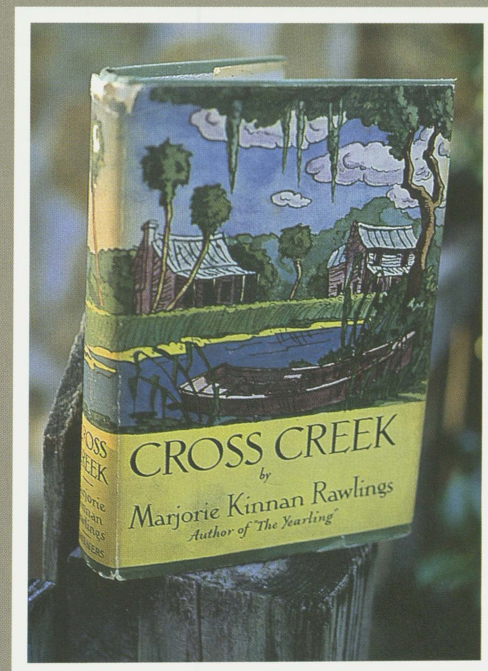
An old black Royal typewriter still sits on a wooden pedestal table on the porch. A yellowed portion of a manuscript extends beyond the slick cylinder, and nearby is a small vase of flowers, freshly picked from the garden or along the roadside. On this porch, as light filters through the screens, and her favorite red birds sing in the shrubbery outside, not much has changed. It is still an enchanting and tranquil place. And, before writers ever discussed in depth the concept of "writing the region," Rawlings was here writing it in a way few could. Cross Creek became such an intimate place for Rawlings, "a beauty of the familiar" as she put it, that she simply could not help writing about it with love, joy and precision.



### To Learn More

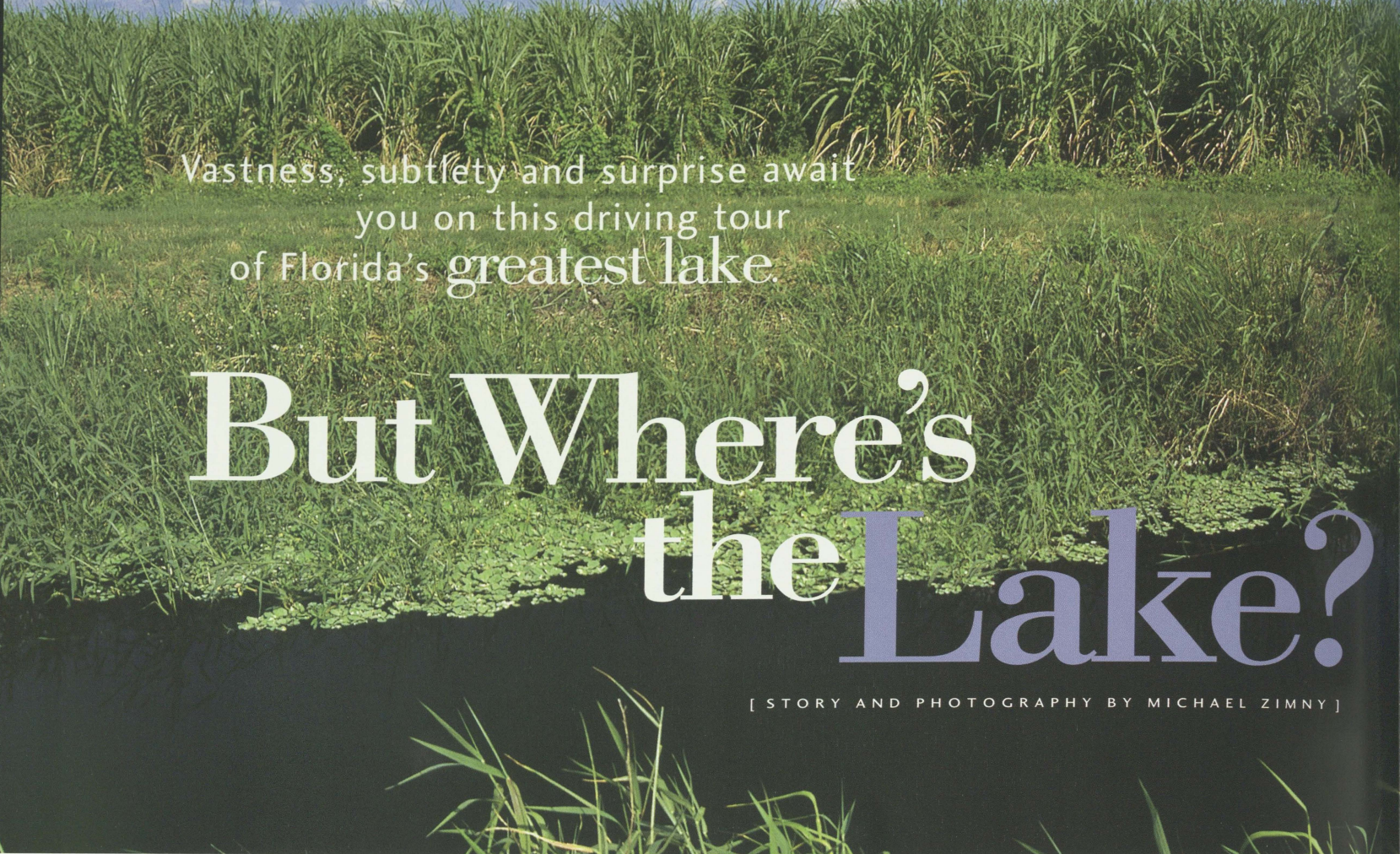
The Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings State Historic Site was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1970. To get to the home, take Highway 441 just south of Micanopy and turn east on County Road 346 about four miles, then turn right on County Road 325 and travel four miles to the site. Entrance to the grounds is free, though there is a fee for a guided tour of the home. Tours are offered October through July, Thursday–Sunday at 10 and 11 a.m. and on the hour from 1 to 4 p.m. Tours are limited to ten people, so be sure to sign up when you first arrive. Call (352) 466-9273 for further information.





Above, the screened porch appears much as it did when Rawlings wrote here. Lower left, the Rawlings home cat, Marcel, is coaxed from his perch to greet visitors. Lower right, many of Rawlings' books are exhibited inside the home.





Vastness, subtlety and surprise await  
you on this driving tour  
of Florida's greatest lake.

# But Where's the Lake?

[ STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL ZIMNY ]

Lake Okeechobee is a place where things are not always as they seem. There is a lake here, the second largest fresh water body in the United States (Lake Michigan claims first place by a geographic technicality) but it hides behind the earthen walls of a 140-mile long dike. A sober, tabletop-flat landscape planted thick with sugar cane surrounds much of the lake yet its shoreline dissolves into a myriad of tiny estuaries teeming with plants and wildlife. The lake is a place little changed by time, but there is history here—if you know where to look.

Lake Okeechobee is the story of agriculture, recreation and water told in a frontier setting. As early as 500 B.C., the lake's Native Americans built a network of earthworks near the lake unlike anything else in Florida. The most spectacular are the Big Circle Mounds southeast of Clewiston and Fort Center on the lake's northwest shore; however, you'll need an airplane to see their remarkable geometry. Big Circle Mounds consists of a half-circular embankment nearly 600 feet in diameter; Fort Center is a collection of straight line embankments and overlapping circular ditches.

As the Everglades were drained, a complex system of canals, dams and locks were built to control Lake Okeechobee's flooding. Vegetable and sugar cane farming soon followed and flourished in the area's rich, fertile soil. The lake was not so easily tamed however: two disastrous hurricane-spawned floods in 1926 and 1928 killed more than 2,000 people in the Moore Haven and Belle Glade areas before construction of the Herbert Hoover Dike brought further protection from flooding. But even as the lake was settled, its sheer remoteness in an already unpopulated part of the state gave it a frontier-like quality. The people who settled here were pioneers, rugged individu-

als who came to a land that might as well have been as distant as the far west.

Today, less than two hours from either of the state's crowded coasts, Lake Okeechobee is one of Florida's last frontiers. Despite its isolation, the lake has always attracted independent visitors. Sportsmen came first, fishing its shallow waters for bass or catfish. Many of their old fish camps survive today, although now those less experienced with rod and reel may savor the lake's same delicacies at local restaurants. Interested in sightseeing rather than fishing? Then take an airboat ride. Not only can these "swamp buggies" whisk you across the lake's hundreds of square miles of open water, but they're able to navigate its thicket of surrounding wetlands and venture deep into the Everglades.

Along with recreation, agriculture is a mainstay of the lake's economy. Sugar is the lake's leading crop, generating more than a billion dollars annually from a harvest grown on a half million acres of land. Citrus, vegetables and tropical plants are the lake's other "cash crops." To learn more about this part of the lake's history, take an escorted "agricultural" tour of its prized farmlands.

For the first-time visitor, a single-day drive around the lake's 140 miles offers a good overview of many of its attractions, but serious sightseers should plan on spending more time to make the circuit. A few tips before starting out: gas, food and accommodations are easy to find around the southern half of the lake but thin out on its north side except in the Okeechobee vicinity. Winter is the most pleasant time to tour the lake, but be sure to bring your insect repellent.

Our tour begins at **Port Mayaca** atop Hoover Dike with a sweeping view of the lake called Okeechobee or "Big Water" by the Seminoles. Follow U.S. 441 south to **Canal Point** for another lake





Twenty Mile Bend Bridge, Loxahatchee



Canal Point



overlook and then into **Pahokee**. Established around 1914, the town takes its name from an Indian word meaning “grassy water.” Pahokee sits directly on Lake Okeechobee, and offers another great view of the lake from its downtown marina and campground. The Pahokee Historical Museum contains exhibits and memorabilia about the city.

Leave U.S. 441 and travel south on S.R. 715 for a more scenic drive to **Belle Glade** (the name means “Good Earth”). Nearby is one of the lake’s most unique attractions: the Torrey Island Bridge. Moved to its

on the lake’s agricultural history. The Colonial-inspired Clewiston Inn on U.S. 27 was built by the company in 1938 to host visiting dignitaries. Clewiston also offers another good view of the lake from Hoover Dike across the Okeechobee Waterway.

The lake begins to swing away from U.S. 27 west of Clewiston but stay with the highway to **Moore Haven**. Here is the Ortona Cemetery, the resting place of many of the victims of the 1926 and 1928 floods, and Indian Mound Park, with sites dating to 1100-1200 A.D. Two miles west of Moore Haven turn right at S.R. 78 and continue north along the west side of Lake Okeechobee. Cattle country begins here, and the land has a feeling much like that of the high plains.

The north half of the lake is largely unsettled except for the town of **Okeechobee**. Here, visit the Okeechobee Historical Museum housed in a 1909 frame school house or, to get a feel for the local cattle industry, see the Okeechobee Livestock Market, where more than 150,000 head are sold annually. To end your tour, return to U.S. 98 and 441 and travel south to Port Mayaca or, if time permits, follow S.R. 710 for a side trip to **Indiantown**. Just outside of the town is the Barley Barber Swamp, a 400-acre freshwater cypress swamp preserve. A walk along its one-mile long boardwalk will give you a close look at native plant and wildlife, as well as Indian mounds, trading and burial sites.

## An inland sea, land-locked in splendid isolation.

present location in 1935, the single-lane bridge is the oldest manually operated swing bridge still in use in Florida. Crossing the bridge is interesting in itself, but you’re in for a special treat if you happen to be there when a boat passes. A bridge attendant handcranks the span from its center pivot, opening it like a gate allowing the water traffic to pass, then swings the bridge back to its original position. Turn right at S.R. 717 to see the bridge. Also at Belle Glade is the Lawrence Will Museum, which contains exhibits, a photograph collection and archives.

At **South Bay**, pick up busy U.S. 27 and travel west to tiny **Lake Harbor** to see its picturesque 1936 United Methodist Church. Overlooking fields of sugar cane, the simple board and batten structure has a timeless quality reminiscent of a Grant Wood painting. Ten miles farther west is **Clewiston**, “America’s Sweetest Town,” which was developed largely by the sugar industry. A small museum located in the town’s former city hall features exhibits on local history, but plans are now underway by the U.S. Sugar Corporation to develop a new exhibit

### *To Learn More*

There is no single clearinghouse for information about Lake Okeechobee. The following chambers of commerce can provide information about their localities:

Belle Glade (561) 996-2745  
Clewiston (941) 983-7979  
Indiantown (407) 597-2184

Moore Haven (941) 946-0440  
Okeechobee (941) 763-6464  
Pahokee (561) 924-5579

*The Lure of Lake Okeechobee* is an excellent short guide to the lake following a driving tour format; ask for it at any chamber of commerce.



# History Beneath



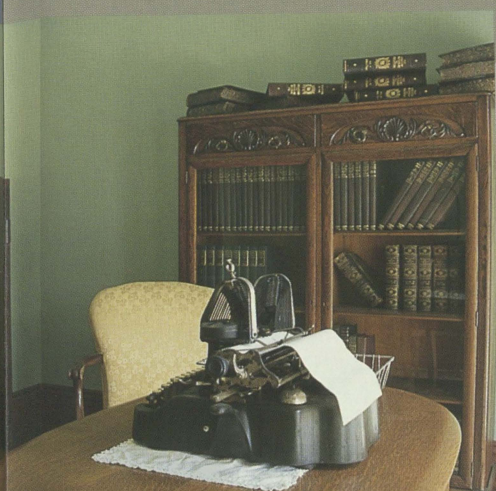
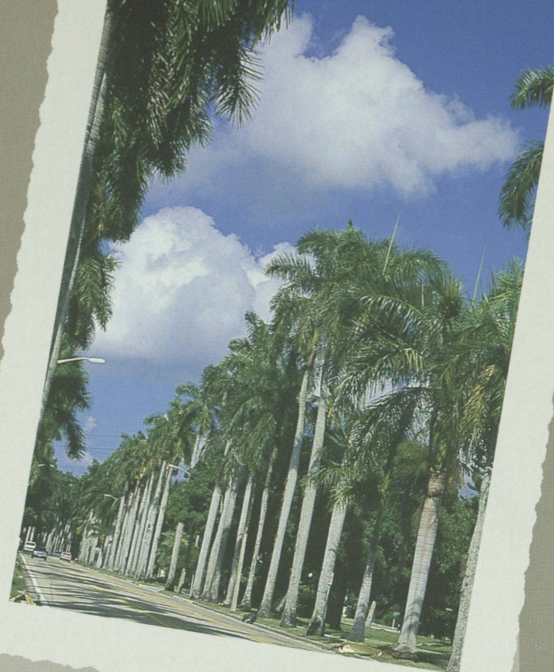
ABOVE, TOP RIGHT AND CENTER, BURROUGHS HOME; LOWER RIGHT, FEDERAL BUILDING.



# The Palms

FORT MYERS PRIDES ITSELF ON ITS  
TOWERING PALMS AND THE HISTORIC CITY  
THAT GREW UP BENEATH THEM.

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY  
BY MICHAEL ZIMNY



“T here’s only one Fort Myers, and ninety million people are going to find out about it,” predicted inventor Thomas Alva Edison when he first visited this tropical pocket on the banks of the Caloosahatchee River. It was an optimistic beginning for what was then a tiny settlement of 349 people. But no matter: it had one of the world’s greatest minds behind it.

Fort Myers was one of the first forts built on the Caloosahatchee (“river of the Calusas”) as a base of operations against the Seminoles. The post began as Fort Harvie in 1841 but was renamed Fort Myers in 1850 in honor of Colonel Abraham C. Myers. In its first years, the river was the easiest way to reach the fledgling settlement and, in 1885, its waters brought Thomas Edison to a very small Fort Myers.

Edison quickly decided that the area’s moderate climate would be helpful to his nagging respiratory problems, and also that its location would be ideal for the experiments he was conducting with bamboo as a light bulb filament. In 1887 he built his Fort Myers residence, one of America’s first prefabricated homes, which had been ferried from Maine by sailing schooner. The Edisons were wintering regularly in Fort Myers when they were visited by Henry Ford and his wife in 1915. When a neighboring house came up for sale the following year, Ford purchased it, and inventor and industrialist became not only neighbors but very close friends.

The Edison and Ford Winter Estates are shown together by guided tours for a single admission. The Edison residence is a simple, unpretentious pair of buildings tied together by a breezeway. The tour will take you past, but not through, the house for a good look at its furnishings, many of them original to the Edison family. Always raising a few murmurs of surprise are the house’s chandeliers, their original light bulbs developed by Edison still burning since the 1920s. Also on the estate’s grounds is Edison’s chemical research laboratory. Practically unchanged down to its original glass equipment, it was built in 1928 for the inventor’s rubber experiments done in conjunction with tire manufacturer Harvey Firestone.

The estate’s gardens are a horticulturist’s dream come true, sheltering exotic tropical plants rarely seen elsewhere. As you wander through them, look for the “Friendship Walk,” a path of stepping stones inscribed by Edison’s guests who gave them as tokens of friendship. A favorite photo opportunity is the magnificent Banyan tree at the visitor’s center. Planted by Edison in 1925, its sinuous aerial roots have a circumference of more than 400 feet.

Next door is the 1911 bungalow of Henry Ford. The man who put the common man in the automobile chose this modest house for his Fort Myers residence. The house has a cozy, warm feeling, although most of its furnishings are not original to it. An often told story is how the living room would be cleared of furniture and used for square dancing, with Ford himself frequently calling out the squares.





# ONE OF FLORIDA'S SMALLEST SETTLEMENTS BEGAN WITH TWO OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST MINDS.

**A**nother Fort Myers house now beautifully restored as a house museum is the 1901 Burroughs Home. Montana cattleman John T. Murphy built the house in the Georgian Revival style, popular at the time in many parts of the country but unusual for south Florida, especially in a small frontier town like Fort Myers. Nelson T. Burroughs, a self-made man from Iowa, bought the house in 1918, which amazingly, remained in his family until 1983.

While Thomas Edison was a very private person and disliked social events, Burroughs was just the opposite and loved to entertain. Not only did the construction of his house cause a building boom on the east side of Fort Myers, it hastened the city's transformation from a rugged frontier town to a settled community. And, just as the personalities of Edison and Burroughs were different, so too were their homes: Edison's relaxed and informal; Burroughs' elaborate and refined.

The original elegance of the Burroughs Home is preserved today. Guides in period dress welcome you to its elaborate center hall, where the slow ticking of a grandfather clock seems to slow the passage of time. Like many large houses of the period, the hall's beautifully crafted staircase was more than just an architectural feature but played an important role in the social custom of meeting and receiving guests. Because the home remained in a single family for so long a time, just about all of its furnishings are original to the house.

Take a few minutes to admire the view of the Caloosahatchee River from the house's grounds, then walk about three blocks up First Street to see another of Fort Myers' architectural landmarks, the Heitman House. Gilmer Heitman came to Fort Myers in 1896 where he served as a real estate agent for John Murphy. Heitman built his own large house in 1908, but selected the more exuberant Queen Anne style for his residence rather than the more balanced Georgian Revival style of his stately neighbor up the street. Often mistakenly called Victorian (a period rather than an architectural style), the house's sweeping porch and its rounded corner tower label it as an example of the Queen Anne style.

For a different look at the history of the City of Palms, visit the Fort Myers Historical Museum. Located in the city's former 1923 Atlantic Coast Line railroad depot, the museum's exhibits feature the skeleton of a 10,000-year-old saber-tooth cat, a model of the city's original fort and many other displays on the city's history. Fort Myers' African American history is being preserved as well. Within the next two years the Lee County Black Historical Society, Inc., plans to open a black history museum in the 1942 Williams Academy located in Clemente Park.

Downtown Fort Myers is gradually becoming a tourist destination itself, as it reclaims its place as the city's business center. With the help of its Main Street program, a new mix of restaurants and nightclubs have sprung up, many along First and Hendry Streets. Downtown is also home to nearly a century of architectural styles,

HENRY  
FORD'S  
MODEST  
1911  
BUNGALOW.



from the stately 1915 Lee County Courthouse to the Art Deco style Edison Theater. One landmark building not easily missed is the 1908 Arcade Theatre. Originally built as a vaudeville playhouse, it has been carefully restored and now offers a mix of plays, movies and children's works.

A drive down McGregor Boulevard completes your visit to Fort Myers. Perhaps no other street in the entire state better epitomizes the classic tropical image of Florida than this palm-lined boulevard. Thomas Edison imported the first of more than one thousand of the boulevard's majestic Royal Palms from their native Cuba and had them planted along a two-mile stretch south of his estate. Although unsuccessful at first, they were later replaced and, with thousands of others, now stretch in an unbroken living historic trail fifteen miles long. Thomas Edison would be proud.

## To Learn More

All of Fort Myers' major historical attractions can be driven to within a few minutes, but if you prefer to ride rather than drive, take the city's historic trolley. The one-hour narrated tour is a great introduction to the city, with stops at all of its historic destinations and many more between. The trolley operates Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; cost is \$3.00 per person.

For general information about the city, contact the Greater Fort Myers Chamber of Commerce at (941) 332-3624, visit their downtown office at 2310 Edwards Drive or their web site at [www.fortmyers.org](http://www.fortmyers.org). Another source of information is the Lee Island Coast Visitor and Convention Bureau; call (800) 533-4753 or visit their web site at [www.leeislandcoast.com](http://www.leeislandcoast.com). For specific information about the following attractions call:

The Burroughs Home  
2505 First Street  
(941) 332-6125

Fort Myers Historical Museum  
2300 Peck Street  
(941) 332-5955

Edison-Ford Winter Estates  
2350 McGregor Boulevard  
(941) 334-3614

Lee County Black History Society  
1936 Henderson Avenue  
(941) 332-8778



## Winter 1999

### Through February 7

#### Melbourne

Art by John Clamp. "Near Impressionist" work is exhibited by Kennedy Space Center technician. Brevard Cultural Alliance. (407) 690-6817

### Through February 14

#### Miami

The Talk of the Town—Rea Irvin of *the New Yorker*. Exhibited works by Rea Irvin, the first art editor of *The New Yorker*, that include over 80 original covers, drawings and cartoons. The Wolfsonian. (305) 535-2615

### Through February 14

#### St. Petersburg

Surrealism in America. During the 1930s and 1940s. Works by American surrealists, including Man Ray, Calder, Sage, Cornell and others. Salvador Dali Museum. (813) 823-3767

### Through March 3

#### Palm Beach

The Splendid Little War, 1898—the Artist's Perspective. Original drawings, water colors and prints by artists such as Howard Chandler Christy explore the Spanish-American War. Henry Morrison Flagler Museum. (561) 655-2833

### Through March 6

#### Boca Raton

Florida Dreams. Exhibit that examines pre-Disney attractions that captured the charm of old Florida, such as Parrot Jungle, Cypress Gardens and Africa U.S.A. Boca Raton Historical Society. (561) 395-6766

### Through March 14

#### Boca Raton

Renoir Cote d'Azur. Oil paintings and bronzes by French Impressionist Pierre-Auguste Renoir in this exhibit from the Renoir Museum in France. The Boca Raton Museum of Art. (800) 322-9477

### Through April 25

#### St. Petersburg

Empires of Mystery—The Incas, The Andes and Lost Civilizations. Exhibit that explores the ancient cultures of Peru, with more than 300 artifacts spanning several thousand years. Florida International Museum. (800) 777-9882

### January 31–March 21

#### Daytona Beach

The Genteel Tradition in American Painting—A Return to a More Smiling Time. Artists including Brownscombe, Waltensperger, Hawthorne and Hatfield portray a simpler time. The Museum of Arts and Sciences. (904) 255-0285

### February 5–20

#### Fort Myers

Edison Festival of Light. The 150th birthday celebration of Thomas Edison that includes Edison/Ford home tours, student science fair, music, food and parades. (941) 334-2999

### February 6–7

#### Dade City

Annual Quilt and Antique Show and Sale. Quilts and antiques on display and for sale during this two-day event. Pioneer Florida Museum Association. (352) 567-0262

### February 6–7

#### Pigeon Key

Fifth Annual Pigeon Key Art Festival. Two days of art, music and foods. Pigeon Key Foundation. (305) 289-0025

### February 7

#### West Palm Beach

Historic Tour of Homes. Enjoy an afternoon walking tour of a dozen restored homes and gardens in the historic El Cid neighborhood with music and refreshments. (561) 833-1212

### February 12–14

#### Gainesville

Annual Hoggetowne Medieval Faire. Festival includes jousting competitions, falconry, chess matches, music, food, dancing, juggling, archery and puppetry. (352) 334-5064

### February 12–14

#### Mount Dora

Fourth Annual Central Florida Antiquarian Book Fair. Workshop, evaluations, book binding, book sale and trade. (800) 472-0665

### February 12–14

#### Lake City

Olustee Battle Festival. Three-day event highlighted by parade, arts and crafts, music, food and, of course, the reenactment itself on the last day. (904) 758-1555

### February 13

#### Tampa

Fiesta Day. Street festival celebrating the history and heritage of Ybor City. Includes multicultural music, folkloric dance groups and food. Ybor City Chamber of Commerce. (813) 248-3712

*Continued on next page.*

**January 31–March 21, The Genteel Tradition in American Painting—A Return to a More Smiling Time. The Museum of Arts and Sciences, Daytona Beach**



*The Doll's Bath, Joseph Henry Hatfield*



## CALENDAR

### February 13-15

#### Coconut Grove

Coconut Grove Arts Festival. Features acclaimed artists' work, international foods and performing artists. Voted number one fine arts festival in the country.  
(305) 447-0401

### February 19-May 30

#### Miami

Coral Gables—The City Beautiful. Exhibit including images, artifacts and documents that de-

pict the Mediterranean-Revival styled community of Coral Gables from its beginnings as an agricultural community to its current status as a headquarters for Latin American business. Historical Museum of South Florida.  
(305) 375-1492

### February 26-27

#### Estero

Ghost Walks. Guided moonlight walks through the Koreshan settlement grounds, reenactments and Koreshan foods developed from

original settlement recipes. Reservations required. Koreshan State Historic Site.  
(941) 992-0311

### February 26-28

#### DeFuniak Springs

Chautauqua Assembly '99. Three-day event involving workshops, lectures, demonstrations and programs in areas of art, literature, architecture, genealogy, music and storytelling. The Chautauqua Center.  
(850) 892-4300

### February 27-28

#### Delray Beach

Hatsume Fair. Taiko drum and martial arts demonstrations, arts and crafts, and Asian and American foods. The Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens.  
(561) 495-0233

### March 1-31

#### Bradenton

Manatee Heritage Days—A Salute to a Century of Progress. Walking tours, reenactments, boat trips, bicycle tours, historic home tours, children's activities, music and food. Manatee Heritage Association.  
(941) 741-4070

### March 1-31

#### Statewide

Florida Archaeology Month. Public events include lectures, exhibits and living history programs.  
(941) 774-8476

### March 6

#### Barberville

Florida Hands Multicultural Festival. Folk art, crafts, music, dance and food of diverse Florida cultures. Pioneer Settlement for the Creative Arts.  
(904) 749-2959

### March 6-7

#### Floral City

Floral City Strawberry Festival. Festival activities include the Citrus Sertoma Fiddling Championship.  
(352) 726-2801

### March 6-7

#### Ocala

Heritage Tour. With the theme "Home, Hearth and History," seven restored historic homes in the Ocala Historic District and the Tusawilla Park Historic District will be toured. Historic Ocala Preservation Society.  
(352) 351-1861

### March 11-14

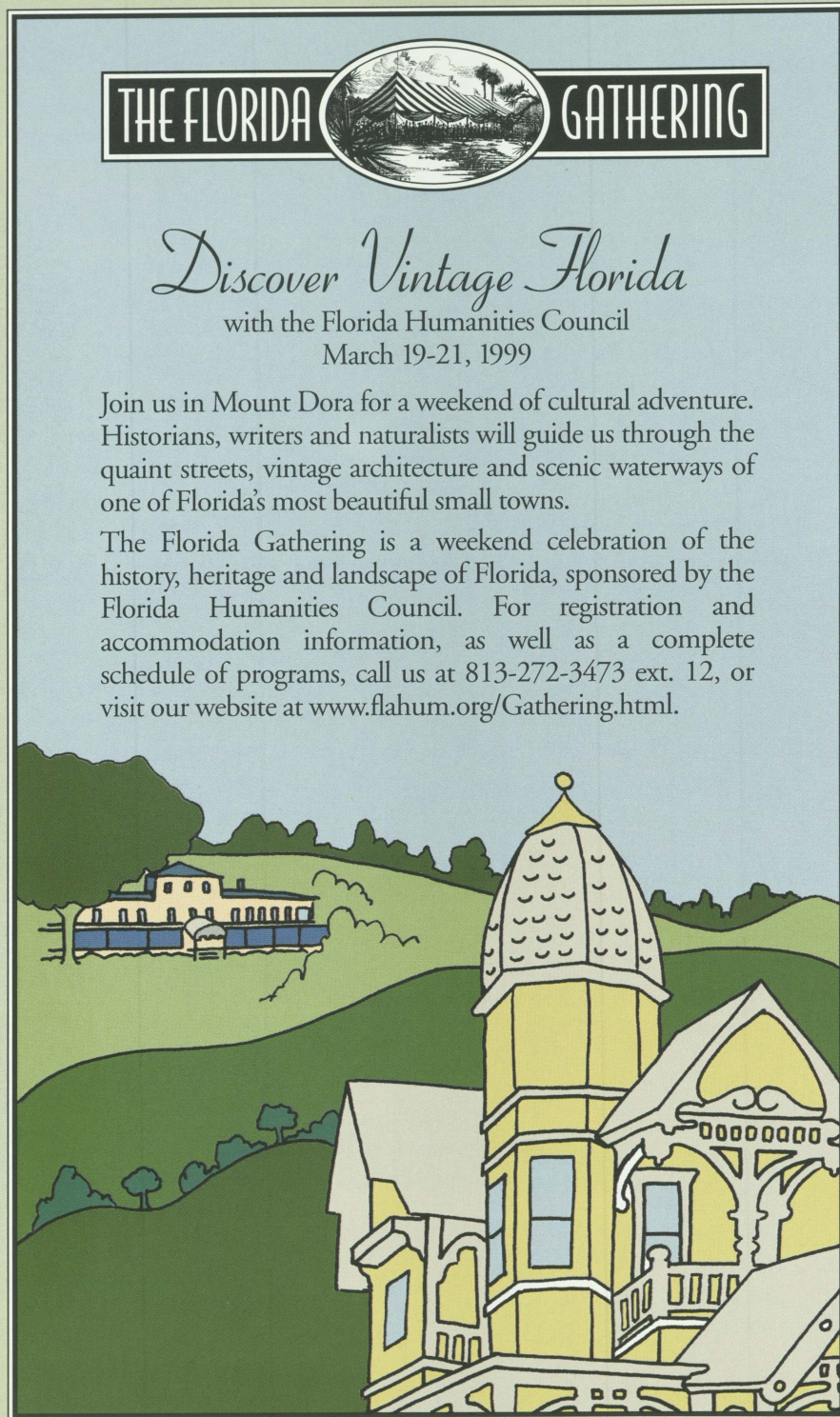
#### Eustis

Florida Storytelling Camp. The largest and most renowned group of storytellers to come to Florida meet for a weekend of workshops and storytelling performances. Florida Storytelling Association.  
(941) 533-7469

### March 12-14

#### Lanark Village

Camp Gordon Johnston Reunion. Gathering of men and women who served at the Lanark Village WWII base, which at one time was the army's principal amphibious training center.  
(850) 697-3246





**March 13****St. Augustine**

Lighthouse Festival. A day of family fun from the Victorian era including games, music, food, and living history activities. St. Augustine Lighthouse and Museum.  
(904) 829-0745

**March 13-14****Dade City**

Will McLean Festival. Florida musical ballads performed on multiple stages, workshops, poetry, storytelling and cracker foods at the Sertoma Youth Ranch.  
(352) 465-7208

**March 19-21****West Palm Beach**

BookFest. New and used books, author workshops, signings, readings and more.  
(561) 471-2901

**March 20****Key West**

Annual Conch Shell Blowing Contest. Contest judged on clearness of tone, range, loudness, duration of sound and novelty sounds. Age categories. Old Island Restoration Foundation.  
(305) 294-9501

**March 23-24****Tallahassee**

Historic Preservation Day. This is the Legislative Day Event for historic preservationists. Florida Trust for Historic Preservation.  
(850) 224-8128

**March 26-27****Dade City**

Pioneer Old Time Music Championships. The Sertoma Youth Ranch is the site for this event, where contestants use exclusively old-time musical instruments. This year, the event features Kentucky Fiddler J. P. Fraley.  
(813) 991-4774



**Through March 6, *Florida Dreams*.**  
**Exhibit that examines the charm of old Florida attractions, such as Parrot Jungle and Cypress Gardens. Boca Raton Historical Society, Boca Raton**

**March 27****Starke**

Bradford County Strawberry Festival. Contests, strawberry recipes, arts and crafts, exhibits and entertainment.  
(904) 758-1555

**April 11****Esterio**

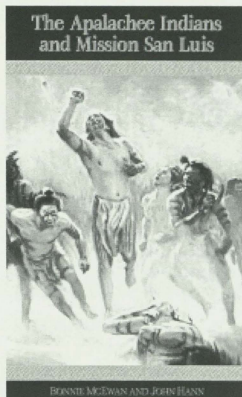
Annual Lunar Festival. Festival highlighting Koreshan heritage and history, music, speakers, a play created from Koreshan archives, and refreshments. Koreshan State Historic Site.  
(941) 992-2184

*Please call the number listed to verify dates.*

*There may be an admission charge for some events. Listings for the calendar should be mailed at least four months in advance to Florida Heritage Magazine, 500 South Bronough St., Tallahassee, FL 32399-0250, or faxed to (850) 922-0496.*

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*Florida*



## The Apalachee Indians and Mission San Luis

John H. Hann  
and Bonnie G. McEwan

"Outstanding. . . Brings to life the Apalachee and their Spanish conquerors. In clear, concise prose it paints a picture of the Apalachee and their society and shows how their interactions with Spanish explorers, missionaries, and colonists shaped the history of their society."—John F. Scarry, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Financed in part with historic preservation grant assistance provided by the Bureau of Historic Preservation, Division of Historical Resources, Florida Department of State, assisted by the Historic Preservation Advisory Council.  
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## "A River in Flood" and Other Florida Stories by Marjory Stoneman Douglas

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April. Cloth, \$49.95

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## Short Stories by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings

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## Edison in Florida

*The Green Laboratory*  
Olav Thulesius  
Cloth, \$29.95

GAINESVILLE, TALLAHASSEE, TAMPA, BOCA RATON, PENSACOLA, ORLANDO, MIAMI, JACKSONVILLE



## FLORIDA'S BLACK PUBLIC OFFICIALS, 1867-1924

By Canter Brown, Jr.

Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, \$22.50

During the tumultuous years following the Civil War, African Americans assumed leadership roles in Florida at all levels of governance. Weaving details from an impressive collection of sources, historian Canter Brown, Jr., demonstrates that efforts by blacks to "maintain an influential voice in public af-

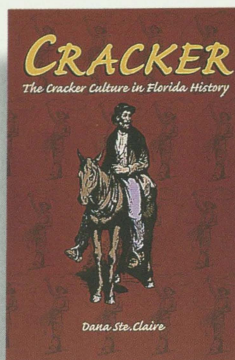
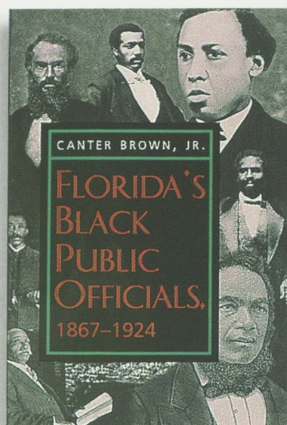
fairs" extended well into the 20th century, despite increasingly stifling social and legal obstacles.

Brown presents his information and evidence in three parts. An initial five-chapter narrative introduces Florida's most prominent African American officials, and places the evolution and course of their leadership within the convoluted

tableau of political and racial events that were gripping the state and nation. A second segment offers brief but meticulously researched biographies of some 600 black officeholders, while the final section lists these leaders according to their state, county, and municipal positions.

This book is notable for several reasons. As the first statewide study of black leadership, it adds a significant chapter to our understanding of African American history and heritage in Florida. In addition, the breadth of Brown's study, and his abundant array of primary and secondary sources, will serve other researchers who wish to explore similar or specific aspects of this topic. Finally, because of Brown's easy style of writing, the book is as valuable for lay readers as scholars. It provides an uncomplicated summary of a complex era in a way that will broaden any reader's understanding of Florida history and appreciation of African American perseverance.

*Reviewed by KC Smith, Bureau of Historical Museums.*



## CRACKER: THE CRACKER CULTURE IN FLORIDA HISTORY

By Dana Ste. Claire.

The Museum of Arts and Sciences, \$19.95.

Despite increasing interest in Florida's Cracker heritage, relatively few works have documented this important group. *Cracker: The Cracker Culture in Florida History* has finally filled that void. This multi-faceted book examines the history of Crackers in the South and particularly in Florida, and also provides detailed ethnographic information. The book lingers on such important topics as the origin of the term "Cracker," architecture, speech, life in the backwoods, cowhunters, foodways, and Cracker sites in Florida.

For those in doubt, Crackers are the widespread population of southern white settlers descended primarily from Celtic, especially Scotch-Irish, stock. Like that of their Celtic forbears, Cracker culture was marked by a pastoral economy with open-range herding, strong family ties, a leisurely lifestyle, and a "tendency to disregard government restrictions." Crackers began migrating to Florida in the early eighteenth century and continued moving south through Florida through the early part of this century. Unfortunately, the cultural and economic differences between Crackers and other Floridians often resulted in a negative assessment of this proud and self-reliant rural people.

Author Dana Ste. Claire, who absorbed Cracker culture while growing up in Ocala, writes in a style simultaneously warm, engaging and scholarly. He has peppered the book with a wide variety of entertaining and instructive historical quotations, photos, illustrations, and short topical sketches that make the book a joy to read.

*Cracker: The Cracker Culture in Florida History* is an important contribution to the widening circle of scholarship on Florida's cultural history.

*Reviewed by Tina Bucuvalas, Bureau of Historic Preservation.*

## MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS AND THE FLORIDA EVERGLADES

By Sandra Wallus Sammons

Tailored Tours Publications, \$14.95.

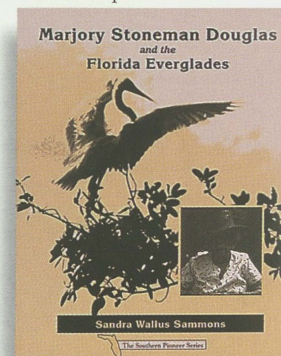
"She was a small woman, about five feet tall...". So begins the story of one of the most respected persons of Florida, Marjory Stoneman Douglas. Although short in stature, she was a giant in terms of her contribution to Florida and the nation: the preservation of the Florida Everglades. But there is more to this remarkable woman than her dedication to the Everglades. Mrs. Douglas led a full and colorful life as a writer, newspaper reporter, editor, public speaker and published author.

In this slim volume designed for the fourth grade reader, the author provides a clear, simple and informative narrative on the life of one of Florida's most revered residents. The text is punctuated with historic photographs and quotes from her writings and speeches, providing a clear and

concise overview of Mrs. Douglas from her childhood in Minnesota to her later years in Coconut Grove. The volume is useful to educators and parents in providing an excellent tool to teach many lessons on life, the environment, the history of Miami and women's contributions during the twentieth century.

The book ends with a list of activities such as joining the Friends of the Everglades, or visiting the Everglades National Park. These simple suggestions give readers a chance to make their own contributions to Florida.

*Reviewed by Vicki Cole, Bureau of Historic Preservation.*





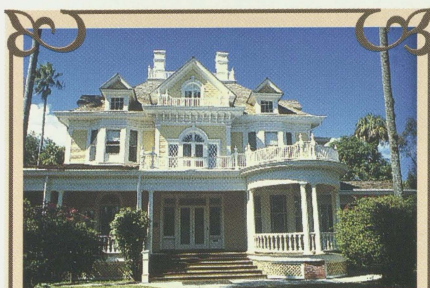
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- Subscription to *Florida Preservation News*
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Call the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation at 850.224.8128, or visit us on-line at [www.floridatrust.org](http://www.floridatrust.org) for more information.



## Step Into the Past

Fort Myers's first luxury home, built by Cattleman John Murphy, and actually credited with starting the area's building boom at the turn of the century has been restored and is open to the public. Today those with a passion for the past can enjoy a 40 minute

"Living History Tour" of this Georgian-revival home. Guides in costume will turn the clock back to 1918. The home is also available for weddings, receptions, parties, and events.

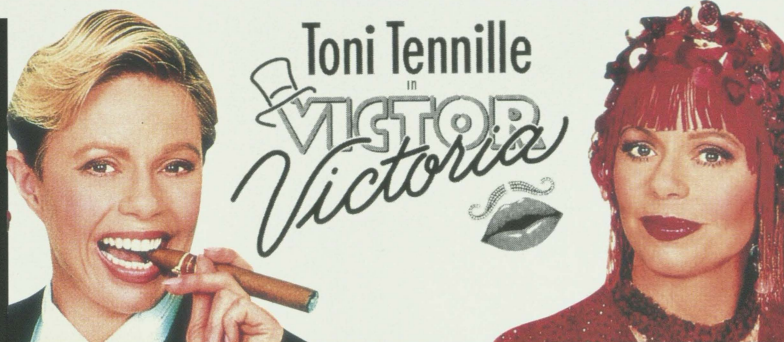
## the Burroughs Home

2505 First Street (P.O. Box 2215) Fort Myers, FL 33902  
For information: (941) 332-6125, Fax: (941) 332-6806  
Living History Tours: Tues. - Fri., hourly 11am to 3pm.  
Admission: \$3.00 per person.

Parking: Next door at the Amtel Marina Hotel or take the tram from the Edison Home

## Discover Naples and Let the Phil Entertain You!

### Theater



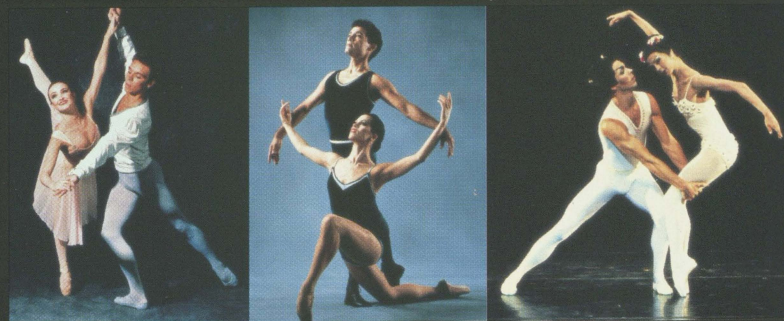
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Kathleen Battle ~ February 22, 1999

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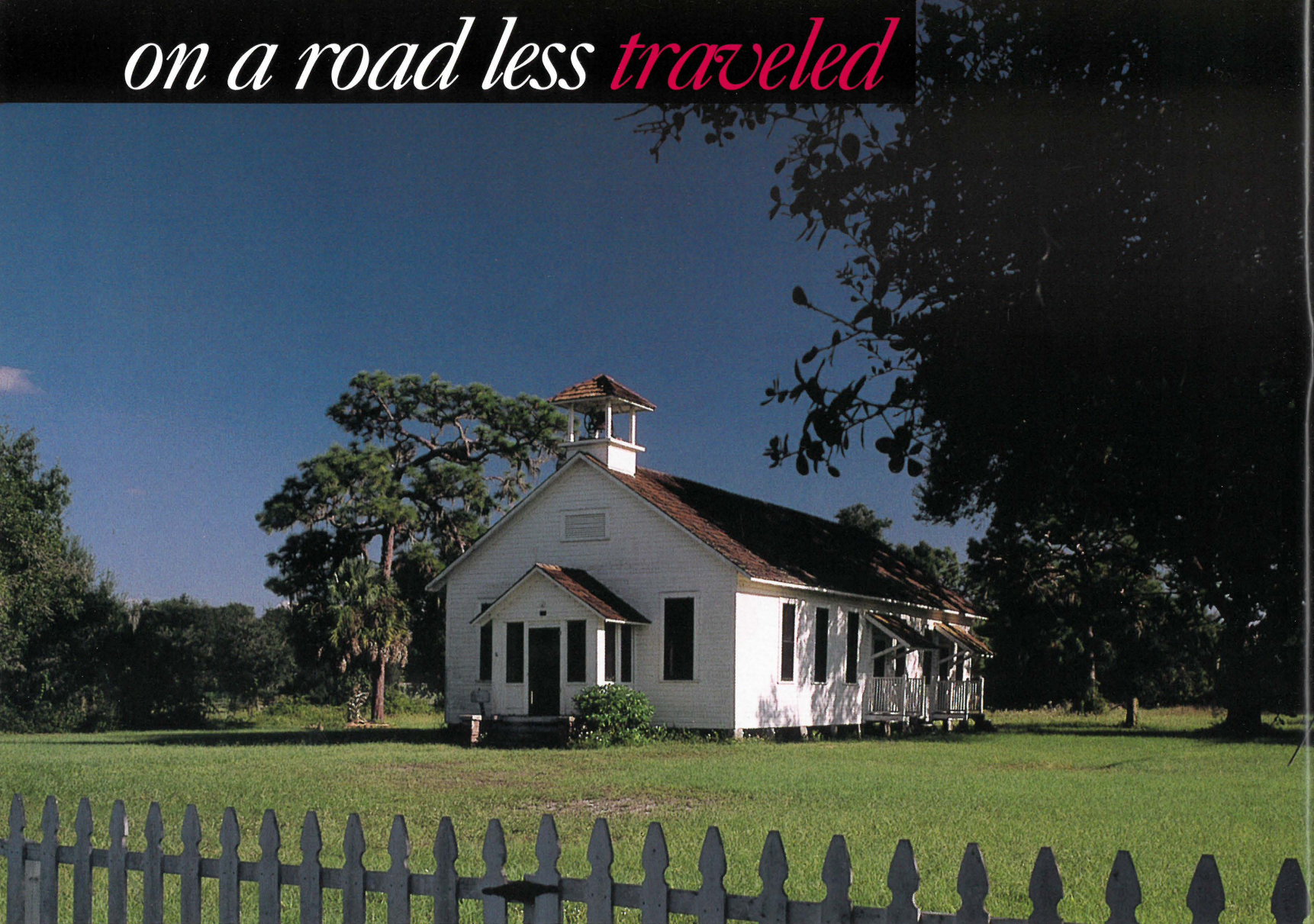
Filled with beautiful photographs of magnificent and interesting historic sites. \$11.95.

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*on a road less traveled*



## SCHOOL BELL DAYS

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL ZIMNY

**I**t's a sound not often heard today—the ring of a school house bell. But in the piney woods of eastern Sarasota County, the bell atop the 1914 Miakka School House still peals. The simple, wood frame school is a disappearing cultural icon; a reminder of the importance of education even in a frontier setting.

Organized around 1850, the settlement of Miakka is the oldest community in Sarasota County. A county bond issue funded the rustic school's construction, which opened in September 1914. At the time, one teacher, who usually lived with one of the families in the community, served the entire school. Students did not follow a progression of grades as today but instead were gauged by the number of “books” they were studying. The school year lasted only five months, leaving children plenty of time to help out

with the family crops and chores. Even when school was in session, a day was set aside as wash day when all students stayed home to help with this important task.

The Miakka School remained in use as a school until around 1944; today it serves as a community meeting hall. Remarkably, the building has hardly changed, and even retains its original slate blackboards. Its cast iron bell is there too, which has called so many students to its single classroom.

---

*To visit the Miakka School, follow Fruitville Road (S. R. 780) about ten miles east from I-75 until it dead ends, then turn right and travel about one mile. The school is on your right at the first bend in the road.*



## GIVE A GIFT OF BEAUTY

A gift subscription to *Florida Heritage* magazine will bring the beauty of Florida home to your loved ones throughout the year.

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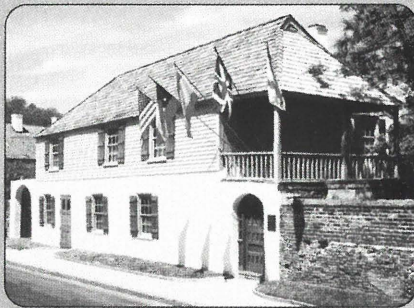
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## Greetings from Cross Creek



"The book captures her Spirit," writes the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Society. Telling about Florida's north central backwoods, the Big Scrub, her stories about the Crackers were read and loved by people throughout the world. This book tells about the exciting life, times, and contributions of an exceptional Florida author. Price: \$14.95, 72 pages, over 20 historic photos, ISBN 0-9631241-5-3. To place an order or request a catalog, phone 1-800-354-5246 or write to: Tailored Tours Publications, Box 22861, Lake Buena Vista, FL 32830



## See Fort Lauderdale Once Upon a Time

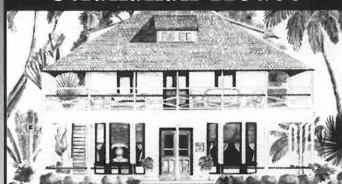
Nestled within the modern city of Fort Lauderdale are three historical treasures filled with architectural richness and colorful history. A visit to these sites is a journey through time, and an experience to remember!

### Bonnet House



Located between the beach and Intracoastal Waterway just south of Sunrise Boulevard at 900 North Birch Road. (954) 563-5393

### Stranahan House



Located in Downtown Fort Lauderdale, at Las Olas Boulevard and SE 6th Avenue. (954) 524-4736

### Historical Museum



Located in the Historic District at 219 SW 2nd Avenue. (954) 463-4431

Funding for these organizations is provided in part by the Broward Community Foundation, Broward County Board of County Commissioners, the Broward Cultural Affairs Council, and the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Historical Resources.



Illustrations by: Susan Dvorak



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## In Upcoming Issues...

### ■ Eatonville

The hometown of Zora Neale Hurston, Eatonville is the country's oldest black municipality. Now, this Orlando enclave is making tremendous strides in preserving and presenting its history.

### ■ White Springs

This lovely little community mushrooms every May during the annual Florida Folk Festival. But, throughout its history, it has attracted visitors to its healing springs and riverside atmosphere.

### ■ Historic Pensacola

Seville Square, Plaza Ferdinand, and Zaragoza Street invoke images from other countries and other times. We'll visit the historic village and see how a city has preserved its past.



**Seville Square, Pensacola**



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